

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 NEW DE 02521 01 OF 02 182003Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 OMB-01 /076 W
-----190057 099618 /66

R 181321Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1398
INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USLO PEKING
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
HQ CINCPAC HAWAII
AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMCONSUL MADRAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 NEW DELHI 2521

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, IN
SUBJECT: INDIAN ELECTIONS I: THE CONGRESS CANDIDATES

REF: NEW DELHI 2083

SUMMARY: AN EXAMINATION OF THE NOW-COMPLETED LISTS OF CONGRESS
CANDIDATES FOR THE LOK SABHA CONFIRMS LAST WEEK'S IMPRESSION (REFTEL)
THAT JAGJIVAN RAM'S RESIGNATION FORCED THE PARTY'S HIGH COMMAND
TO NOMINATE MAINLY TRIED AND "TRUE" POLITICAL FIGURES. NATIONWIDE,
71 PERCENT OF THE SITTING MP'S WERE RENOMINATED, A
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 NEW DE 02521 01 OF 02 182003Z

FIGURE WHICH PARALLELS THE 78 PERCENT OF 1971. IN THE VITAL STATES
OF BIHAR AND U.P. 75 PERCENT AND 80 PERCENT OF THE SITTING
MEMBERS RECEIVED TICKETS RESPECTIVELY. THE CONGRESS LISTS REVEAL
FEW NEW YOUNG FACES; IN SEVERAL STATES MANY OF THE CANDIDATES
ARE ELDERLY AND FEEBLE. WOMEN RECEIVED ONLY 21 TICKETS (AS
IN 1971), A FURTHER SIGN OF THE CONSERVATIVE CHARACTER OF THE
RULING PARTY. ALL SITTING MEMBERS OF THE LOK SABHA WHO ARE IN

THE CENTRAL CABINET WERE RENOMINATED. THE YOUTH CONGRESS HAS SUFFERED A SERIOUS SETBACK, WITH ONLY 21 IDENTIFIABLE YOUTH CONGRESSMEN BEING GIVEN TICKETS, NOT ALL OF THEM PRO-SANJAY, AND MANY YC LEADERS AND CADRES ARE DESERTING THE ORGANIZATION IN ANGER AND DISILLUSIONMENT. NONETHELESS, SANJAY GANDHI APPARENTLY INTENDS TO REMAIN IN PUBLIC LIFE AND IS CONTESTING A SEAT IN U.P. SOME OBSERVERS FEEL MRS. GANDHI MAY HAVE MADE A SERIOUS ERROR IN ALLOWING HER SON TO RUN, SINCE SO MUCH POPULAR RESENTMENT IS FOCUSED ON HIM. IN ALL, CONGRESS HAS FIELDDED 492 CANDIDATES FOR THE 542 SEATS IN THE LOWER HOUSE. THROUGH ELECTORAL ADJUSTMENTS, IT HAS ALLOWED THE DCPI, AIADMK AND SEVERAL SMALLER PARTIES AND INDEPENDENTS TO CONTEST THE REMAINING 50 SEATS UNOPPOSED. THE CURRENT SOUR STATE OF CONGRESS: CPI RELATIONS ALLOWED FOR ADJUSTMENTS BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES ONLY IN WEST BENGAL, KERALA AND TAMIL NADU. THE CAMPAIGN HAS GOTTEN UNDER WAY IN EARNEST, AND THE PRIME MINISTER IS LIKELY TO SPEND THE WEEKS BETWEEN NOW AND THE POLL CONSTANTLY ON THE HUSTINGS. HER BARNSTORMING TOUR WILL PROBABLY WIND UP IN U.P. AND BIHAR, THE TWO STATES WHERE CONGRESS FORTUNES HAVE BEEN MOST SERIOUSLY AFFECTED BY RECENT DEFECTIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. THE DEADLINE FOR FILING NOMINATION PAPERS (FEBRUARY 17) HAS PASSED AND THE SHAPE OF THE ELECTORAL CONTEST IN THE MARCH LOK SABHA POLL IS CLEARER. THE FINAL COMPOSITION OF THE RACES IN INDIVIDUAL CONSTITUENCIES WILL NOT BE KNOWN, HOWEVER, UNTIL FEBRUARY 21 (THE LAST DAY FOR WITHDRAWING NOMINATION PAPERS).

2. CONGRESS TICKETS: AN EXAMINATION OF THE FINAL STATE LISTS APPROVED BY THE CENTRAL ELECTION COMMITTEE CONFIRMS LAST WEEK'S CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 NEW DE 02521 01 OF 02 182003Z

IMPRESSION (REFTEL) THAT JAGJIVAN RAM'S RESIGNATION FORCED THE CONGRESS HIGH COMMAND TO REEXAMINE ALL THE CANDIDATE LISTS AND TO NOMINATE MAINLY CANDIDATES WITH ESTABLISHED LOCAL POWER BASES, DEMONSTRATED PREVIOUS ELECTORAL SUCCESS, AND COMMUNAL AND CASTE RESPECTABILITY. 492 CONGRESS NOMINATIONS WERE DISTRIBUTED. HALF (253) WENT TO SITTING CONGRESS MEMBERS OF THE LOK SABHA. 71 PERCENT OF THE SITTING CONGRESS MP'S (253 OUT OF 355) WERE RENOMINATED. IN ADDITION, 16 MEMBERS OF THE RAJYA SABHA AND 37 STATE LEGISLATORS RECEIVED CONGRESS TICKETS. WE UNDERSTAND THAT MANY OTHER RECIPIENTS OF CONGRESS TICKETS--WHILE THEY MIGHT NOT HAVE BEEN MEMBERS OF STATE ASSEMBLIES--NEVERTHELESS HAD PROVEN THEIR POLLING POWER AS LONG-TIME ELECTED LEADERS IN LOCAL GOVT INSTITUTIONS OR AS PROMINENT (AND TRUSTED) FIGURES IN LOCAL CONGRESS AND INTUC ORGANIZATIONS. IN THE TWO LARGEST AND MOST CRITICAL STATES FOR THE CONGRESS, U.P. AND BIHAR, THIS RELIANCE ON TRIED AND TRUSTED CONGRESSMEN IS MOST PRONOUNCED: IN U.P. 57 OUT OF 71 SITTING MEMBERS (80 PERCENT) AND IN BIHAR 28 OUT OF 37 (75 PERCENT) OF SITTING MEMBERS WERE RENOMINATED. THESE TWO STATES HAVE

TRADITIONALLY FORMED THE FOUNDATION OF CONGRESS MAJORITIES IN THE LOK SABHA AND ARE THE STATES LIKELY TO BE MOST SERIOUSLY AFFECTED BY THE DEFECTIONS OF JAGJIVAN RAM AND H.N. BAHUGUNA. IN THE CHANGED POLITICAL SITUATION, THE CONGRESS DOES NOT WANT TO TAKE ANY CHANCES BY PROPOSING NEW FACES.

3. INDEED, MANY OF THE FACES RECEIVING TICKETS ARE VERY OLD ONES. IN MADHYA PRADESH, FOR EXAMPLE, THE CONGRESS LIST INCLUDES AT LEAST FOUR SEPTUGENARIANS, AND MOST OF THE REST ARE OVER 50 YEARS OF AGE. IN U.P; ONE CANDIDATE IS OVER 80, THREE ARE IN THEIR 70'S AND ONE IS A 69-YEAR OLD VICTIM OF PARALYSIS. IN BIHAR, THE YOUNGEST CANDIDATE (ASIDE FROM THE LONE YOUTH CONGRESS NOMINEE) IS IN HIS LATE 40'S. THE CONGRESS APPEARS SO INTENT ON NOMINATING PROVEN POLITICAL FIGURES THAT IT EVEN PERSUADED TWO GOVERNORS TO RESIGN THEIR POSITIONS TO CONTEST SEATS: 61 YEAR OLD ANDHRA PRADESH GOVERNOR R.D. BHANDARE HAD BEEN ELECTED TO THE LOK SABHA IN 1971 FROM A BOMBAY HARIJAN CONSTITUENCY
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 NEW DE 02521 01 OF 02 182003Z

AND LATER RESIGNED TO BE APPOINTED GOVERNOR; HE WILL NOW AGAIN RUN FOR A MOMBAY SEAT. 73-YEAR OLD JOGINDER SINGH RESIGNED AS GOVERNOR OF RAJASTHAN EARLY THIS WEEK TO CONTEST THE SEAT IN HIS HOME DISTRICT IN U.P; WHERE HE IS A POWERFUL AND INFLUENTIAL LANDLORD. HE IS RUNNING DESPITE HIS ADVANCED AGE AND FAILING HEALTH. ONE SOURCE KNOWLEDGEABLE ON U.P. AFFAIRS TELLS US THAT SOME CONGRESS CANDIDATES IN THAT STATE ARE SO OLD AND FEEBLE THAT THEY WILL HAVE TO BE PHYSICALLY CARRIED AROUND BY PARTY WORKERS WHEN THEY CAMPAIGN. NONETHELESS, THEY RECEIVED TICKETS BECAUSE OF THE HIGH COMMAND'S REALIZATION THAT WERE THEY TO BOLT TO THE OPPOSITION THEY WOULD RETAIN ENOUGH POWER AND INFLUENCE IN THEIR DISTRICTS TO DEFEAT ANY CANDIDATE THE CONGRESS WOULD FIELD.
(CONT...)

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 NEW DE 02521 02 OF 02 182027Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 OMB-01 /076 W
-----190102 100018 /66

R 181321Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1399
INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USLO PEKING
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
HQ CINCPAC HAWAII
AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMCONSUL MADRAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 NEW DELHI 2521

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

REF: NEW DELHI 2083

4. THE YOUTH CONGRESS HAS OBVIOUSLY SUFFERED A SERIOUS SETBACK. ACCORDING TO OUR CALCULATIONS, ONLY 21 IDENTIFIABLE YOUTH CONGRESSMEN HAVE RECEIVED TICKETS AND THIS INCLUDES NINE IN WEST BENGAL, WHERE FOR HISTORICAL REASONS THE YOUTH CONGRESS HAS HAD A DISPROPORTIONATE ROLE IN CONGRESS AFFAIRS. ELSEWHERE, YOUTH CONGRESS CANDIDATES HAVE BEEN NOMINATED AS FOLLOWS: TWO EACH IN ORISSA AND MADHYA PRADESH, AND ONE EACH IN ANDHRA PRADESH, BIHAR, KARNATAKA, KERALA, MAHARASHTRA, RAJASTHAN, TAMIL NADU, AND U.P. (SANJAY GANDHI). EVEN SOME OF THESE CANDIDATES
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 NEW DE 02521 02 OF 02 182027Z

ARE LESS SUPPORTERS OF SANJAY THAN OF OTHER CONGRESS LEADERS (ONE OF THOSE IN MADHYA PRADESH AND THE CONGRESS CANDIDATE IN MAHARASHTRA, FOR EXAMPLE).

5. YOUTH CONGRESS LEADERS AND CADRE ARE REPORTED TO BE DISILLUSIONED AND ANJRY WITH THE DECLINE IN THEIR GROUP'S FORTUNES. MANY ARE DESERTING TO THE JANATA PARTY OR RAM'S CONGRESS FOR DEMOCRACY (CFD) OUT OF PIQUE AND FRUSTRATION AT NOT RECEIVING THE REWARDS THEY HAD ANTICIPATED EARLIER BY JUMPING ON SANJAY'S BANDWAGON. YC PRESIDENT AMBIKA SONI IS REPORTED TO BE FURIOUS AT BEING BLAMED FOR THE SETBACK, AS WELL AS BEING REFUSED A TICKET HERSELF. (BEFORE RAM'S RESIGNATION, MRS. SONI WAS WIDELY RUMORED TO BE A CANDIDATE EITHER IN DELHI OR THE PUNJAB. APPARENTLY, THE CONGRESS HIGH COMMAND DECIDED THAT POPULAR RESENTMENT TOWARD THE YOUTH CONGRESS WAS SO STRONG IN THESE AREAS THAT IT COULD NOT RISK FIELDING HER.) NONETHELESS, SANJAY GANDHI HIMSELW WILL CONTEST FROM THE AMETHI CONSTITUENCY

IN U.P. WHICH ADJOINS HIS MOTHER'S RAE BARELLI DISTRICT. HIS JANATA OPPONENT, 39-YEAR OLD RAVINDRA PRATAP SINGH, IS A FORMER JAN SANGH MLA IN THE STATE ASSEMBLY, A LAWYER AND A LOCAL YOUTH LEADER. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE QUESTION OF SANJAY'S CANDIDACY CAUSED A TUSSE IN THE CONGRESS HIGH COMMAND, WITH PARTY PRESIDENT BAROOAH AGAINST IT AND SANJAY INTIMATES (OM MEHTA, BANSI LAL) ARGUING IN FAVOR. SOME OF OUR SOURCES BELIEVE THAT MRS. GANDHI MAY HAVE MADE A SERIOUS ERROR IN ALLOWING HER SON TO CONTEST SINCE SO MUCH POPULAR RESENTMENT BOTH WITHIN AND WITHOUT THE RULING PARTY IS FOCUSED ON SANJAY. IN ADDITION, THE CONCENTRATION OF FUNDS AND RESOURCES ON THE AMETHI DISTRICT TO ENSURE SANJAY'S VICTORY WILL PROBABLY DIVERT THESE RESOURCES FROM OTHER DISTRICTS AND POSSIBLY DAMAGE CONGRESS PROSPECTS. WE ARE NOT SURE HOW MUCH CAMPAIGNING SANJAY WILL DO FOR OTHER CANDIDATES OR HOW MANY WILL WANT HIM TO CAMPAIGN. FORMER PARTY GENERAL SECRETARY AZIZ IMAM BLANCHED WHEN TOLD SANJAY WOULD SPEAK FOR HIM. "I'LL LOSE MY DEPOSIT" HE TOLD AN EMBASSY SOURCE.

6. WOMEN RECEIVED ONLY 21 CONGRESS TICKETS, THE SAME NUMBER AS
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 NEW DE 02521 02 OF 02 182027Z

IN 1971, A FURTHER SIGN OF THE CONSERVATIVE CHARACTER OF THE CONGRESS NOMINATION PROCESS. ALL SITTING MEMBERS OF THE LOK SABHA WHO ARE IN THE CENTRAL CABINET RECEIVED TICKETS, AND SEVERAL CENTRAL MINISTERS WHO ARE CURRENT MEMBERS OF THE RAJYA SABHA HAVE BEEN NOMINATED TO CONTEST LOWER HOUSE SEATS (DEFENSE MINISTER BANSI LAL, HOME MINISTER BRAHMANANDA REDDY, AND INDUSTRIES MINISTER T.A. PAI).

7. SEAT ADJUSTMENTS: IN ALL, CONGRESS IS CONTESTING 492 OF THE 542 SEATS FOR THE LOK SABHA, A NUMBER APPRECIABLY HIGHER THAN IN 1971 WHEN CONGRESS FIELDED CANDIDATES FOR 441 OF THEN-518 SEATS IN THE LOWER HOUSE. IN 1971 CONGRESS HAD REACHED ELECTORAL UNDERSTANDINGS AND ADJUSTMENTS WITH SEVERAL OTHER PARTIES, WHICH IN EFFECT GAVE THEM CERTAIN SEATS BECAUSE THE CONGRESS DID NOT CONTEST IN THOSE DISTRICTS. MOST NOTABLE OF THESE ADJUSTMENTS WERE WITH THE DMK IN TAMIL NADU, AND WITH THE CPI IN PUNJAB, U.P; BIHAR, WEST BENGAL, TAMIL NADU AND KERALA. THIS TIME, HOWEVER, CONGRESS RELATIONS WITH THE CPI HAVE TURNED SOUR (SEE NEW DELHI 1251) AND ADJUSTMENTS HAVE BEEN WORKED OUT ONLY IN THOSE STATES IN WHICH THE CPI HAS ACKNOWLEDGED STRENGTH. OF THE 50 SEATS WHICH THE CONGRESS IS NOT CONTESTING THIS YEAR, 15 HAVE BEEN LEFT TO THE CPI. ADJUSTMENTS WERE ARRANGED IN WEST BENGAL WHICH GAVE THE CPI EIGHT SEATS. IN KERALA, THE RULING FRONT COALITION IS CONTESTING BOTH THE LOK SABHA AND STATE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS JOINTLY: CONGRESS HAS BEEN ALLOTTED 11 OF KERALA'S 20 LOK SABHA SEATS, THE CPI FOUR, AND OTHER PARTNERS THE REMAINING 5. IN TAMIL NADU, THE CONGRESS WORKED OUT AN UNDERSTANDING WITH THE ALL INDIA ANNA DMK (AIADMK) UNDER WHICH THE RULING PARTY WILL CONTEST 15 SEATS, THE AIADMK 21, AND CPI

THREE. IN ADDITION, CONGRESS HAS LEFT THE PONDICHERRY SEAT TO THE AIADMK. IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR, CONGRESS SOME TIME AGO REACHED AN AGREEMENT WITH SHEIKH ABDULLAH'S NATIONAL CONFERENCE WHICH SPLIT THE STATE'S SIX SEATS EVENLY BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES. OF THE REMAINING FIVE SEATS WHICH THE CONGRESS IS NOT CONTESTING, ONE HAS BEEN GIVEN TO THE REPUBLICAN PARTY OF INDIA (RPI) IN MAHARASHTRA, ONE TO THE LOCAL JAT CASTE VISHAL HARYANA
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 NEW DE 02521 02 OF 02 182027Z

PARTY (VHP) IN HARYANA, TWO TO POWERFUL MAHARAJAS IN MADHYA PRADESH, AND ONE TO A MAHARAJA IN ORISSA. THESE LATTER THREE FORMER PRINCES WILL RUN AS INDEPENDENTS, BUT WILL BE CONSIDERED AS CONGRESSMEN BY THE ELECTION COMMISSION IN THE NEW LOK SABHA.

8. WITH THE CONGRESS LISTS NOW COMPLETE, THE CAMPAIGN HAS GOTTEN UNDER WAY IN EARNEST. MRS. GANDHI FILED HER NOMINATION PAPERS IN RAE BARELLI ON FEBRUARY 17 AND THEN MADE A QUICK SPEECHMAKING SWING THROUGH HER CONSTITUENCY BEFORE RETURNING TO DELHI IN THE EVENING. SHE APPARENTLY INTENDS TO REPEAT THE WHIRLWIND BARNSTORMING SORT OF CAMPAIGN WHICH SHE CONDUCTED IN 1971 AND WILL BE ON THE ROAD ALMOST CONSTANTLY BETWEEN NOW AND POLLING TIME. SHE IS SCHEDULED TO VISIT ALMOST ALL THE STATES AND UNION TERRITORIES, BUT WILL FOCUS HER ATTENTION ON THE KEY STATES OF U.P. AND BIHAR AT THE END OF THE CAMPAIGN. SHE, OF COURSE, IS THE ONLY CANDIDATE WHO CAN SET AND KEEP SUCH A HECTIC PACE, SINCE SHE ALONE HAS ACCESS TO INDIAN AIR FORCE PLANES AND HELICOPTERS.

9. WE WILL BE EXAMINING THE OPPOSITION PARTY CANDIDATE LISTS AND CONSIDERING THE TWO SETS OF LISTS IN CONTRAST TO ONE ANOTHER IN A SEPARATE MESSAGE NEXT WEEK.
SCHNEIDER

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NATIONAL ELECTIONS, CENTRAL LEGISLATURE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 18-Feb-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977NEWDE02521
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770059-0446
Format: TEL
From: NEW DELHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770227/aaaaaxwe.tel
Line Count: 314
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: b19a7cc4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 NEW DELHI 2083
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3281605
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: INDIAN ELECTIONS I: THE CONGRESS CANDIDATES
TAGS: PINT, IN
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/b19a7cc4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009